

**2003-2004 No Child Left Behind---Blue Ribbon Schools Program  
Cover Sheet**

Name of Principal Ms. Donna Barton  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name St. Joseph Montessori School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 933 Hamlet Street  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

Columbus Ohio 43201-3595  
City State Zip Code + 4

Tel. (614) 291-8601 Fax (614) 291-7411

Website/URL www.sjms.net E-mail dluke@cdeeducation.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

Donna Barton Date 1/28/04  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent Ms. Lucia McQuaide  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Columbus Tel. (614) 221-5829

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

Lucia D. McQuaide Date 1/28/04  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Mr. Scott Reifeis  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

Scott E. Reifeis Date 1/28/04  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades K-12. (Schools with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as one entire school.)
2. The school has not been in school improvement status or been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's adequate yearly progress requirement in the 2003-2004 school year.
3. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, it has foreign language as a part of its core curriculum.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 1998.
5. The nominated school or district is not refusing the OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
6. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if the OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
7. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school, or the school district as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
8. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

**PART II – DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

All data are the most recent year available.

**DISTRICT** (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district: \_\_\_\_\_ Elementary schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Middle schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Junior high schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ High schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Other (Briefly explain)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Total
2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: \_\_\_\_\_

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- ☒ [ X ] Urban or large central city  
☐ [ ] Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area  
☐ [ ] Suburban  
☐ [ ] Small city or town in a rural area  
☐ [ ] Rural
4. 16 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.  
n/a If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?
5. Number of students enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
<b>K</b>	27	18	45	<b>7</b>	11	3	14
<b>1</b>	9	26	35	<b>8</b>	7	7	14
<b>2</b>	14	11	25	<b>9</b>			
<b>3</b>	13	12	25	<b>10</b>			
<b>4</b>	9	14	23	<b>11</b>			
<b>5</b>	13	9	22	<b>12</b>			
<b>6</b>	7	13	20	<b>Pre-K</b>	38	43	81
			<b>TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL</b>				<b>304</b>

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:
- |  |
|--|
| <u>72.5</u> % White                        |
| <u>15.4</u> % Black or African American    |
| <u>3.9</u> % Hispanic or Latino            |
| <u>7.5</u> % Asian/Pacific Islander        |
| <u>.7</u> % American Indian/Alaskan Native |
| <b>100% Total</b>                          |

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 3.3 %

(This rate includes the total number of students who transferred to or from different schools between October 1 and the end of the school year, divided by the total number of students in the school as of October 1, multiplied by 100.)

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	4
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	6
(3)	Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	10
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	305
(5)	Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)	.033
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3.3 %

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: .3 %  
1 Total Number Limited English Proficient

Number of languages represented: 6

Specify languages: Chinese, Spanish, German, Arabic, Greek, Igbo

While we have only one student who is limited in her English proficiency, we have 12 students who come from bilingual homes and are able to speak a second language.

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 3.3 %  
10 Total Number Students Who Qualify

If this method does not produce a reasonably accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families or the school does not participate in the federally-supported lunch program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services:  $\frac{15.1}{46} \%$  Total Number of Students Served

While only 23 of our students are diagnosed with specific disabilities, 46 students benefit from special educational or behavioral modifications, such as reading or math tutoring, occupational therapy, visual therapy, etc. We feel that this intervention greatly benefits our students who have special needs, but not a specific disability.

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

<u>3</u> Autism	<u>      </u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>      </u> Deafness	<u>      </u> Other Health Impaired
<u>      </u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>13</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>4</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>1</u> Mental Retardation	<u>      </u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>      </u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

Our school also serves 14 additional students who have been professionally diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder or Oppositional Defiant Disorder. Some students listed above also have one or more of these diagnoses, in addition to a disability.

11. Indicate the number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>	
	<b><u>Full-time</u></b>	<b><u>Part-time</u></b>
Administrator(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>16</u>	<u>1</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>
Support Staff	<u>7</u>	<u>11</u>
Total Number	<u>35</u>	<u>16</u>

12. Average school student-“classroom teacher” ratio: 13:1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. The student dropout rate is defined by the state. The student drop-off rate is the difference between the number of entering students and the number of exiting students from the same cohort. (From the same cohort, subtract the number of exiting students from the number of entering students; divide that number by the number of entering students; multiply by 100 to get the percentage drop-off rate.) Briefly explain in 100 words or fewer any major discrepancy between the dropout rate and the drop-off rate. (Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates and only high schools need to supply drop-off rates.)

	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999
Daily student attendance	95.0%	95.4%	95.6%	95.7%	95.6%
Daily teacher attendance	96.9%	96.6%	96.5%	96.9%	96.8%
Teacher turnover rate	10.3%	14.3%	11.1%	10.7%	17.2%
Student dropout rate					
Student drop-off rate					

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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### **St. Joseph Montessori School**

St. Joseph Montessori School is a private, Catholic Montessori school in Columbus, Ohio. It was established in 1968 and recently celebrated 35 years of educating children. The school is located just a few blocks north of downtown Columbus, within a neighborhood of mixed cultures and economic levels. Families choose SJMS primarily for its educational program, as well as its urban setting and centralized location. Our school draws families from all areas of the central Ohio region, which results in a diverse community of staff and students. We offer before and after school programs and a summer program that is extended to all children in the surrounding communities. Our philosophy of education is based on the studies and ideas of Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian physician and educator who has inspired hundreds of successful schools and educational programs throughout the United States and around the world. Our teachers are state certified and also have completed intensive training in the Montessori philosophy and curriculum.

Students can enter SJMS at three years of age and graduate from our program at the end of eighth grade. They are grouped by age into one of four levels. Three, four and five year olds are together in Children's House, Dr. Montessori's name for the environment which presents young children with opportunities for social interaction and early exposure to sensory development, practical life skills, number sense, early language skills and fine and gross motor activities. A child's third year in the Children's House classroom is usually his or her kindergarten year, a full day experience, which integrates early reading and writing skills, counting and simple math work and cultural experiences. First, second and third graders are grouped in the Primary classrooms. Middle School consists of fourth, fifth and sixth grade. In each classroom, the oldest group of students usually act as role models and guides for the younger children in their level. This is beneficial to all of the students, as it provides opportunities for responsibility for the older children and provides additional support and guidance for the younger children. Seventh and eighth grade students work together in a more traditional environment to culminate their studies at St. Joseph Montessori School and prepare for their successful transition to any high school challenge, public or private.

Our mission statement is as follows: *St. Joseph Montessori School provides Catholic ideals and the Montessori approach to create an environment that supports the academic, social, spiritual, physical and emotional needs of the individual. We are committed to assisting each child's development as a lifelong learner possessing competence, confidence and independence.* From our mission statement, we have drawn out the following goals for each of our students. We are committed to these goals and they are included in our Parent Handbook. First, we strive to foster a positive attitude toward learning by ensuring that each student's work is at an appropriate level and the child meets with success. Our second goal is to encourage self-confidence and independence by planning lessons sequentially and building on what a student has already learned. Third, we encourage an abiding curiosity through our integrated curriculum, which leads our students to continual exploration, discovery and an interest in learning. Finally, it is our goal to instill respect for the dignity of all humankind. We present our students with views of the world and all of its cultures, involve them in service opportunities and teach conflict resolution as a part of our peace education curriculum.

We feel that we are a specialized school in that we offer a Catholic education, which nurtures spiritual growth, and use the Montessori philosophy, which gives our students a comprehensive, multi-sensory and positive school experience. These two facets ultimately integrate with one another to produce competent, confident and independent learners who are fully supported and challenged in all aspects of their development. We strive to meet all developmental needs and to educate the whole child. We believe that through our low student-teacher ratios, our frequent use of assessment strategies and our individualized approach to education, no child is left behind.

## **PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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### **1. Our Assessment Results**

The Terra Nova California Achievement Tests are given annually in October to our students in grades four, six and eight. We do not make any testing accommodations for learning disabled or special needs students, though there are, with rare exception, students in each grade who could benefit from such accommodations. One of the simplest ways to share information about the assessment results is to identify the scores according to national percentile rankings. A national percentile is the percentage of students in a norm group whose scores fall below a given student's or group's score. For example, a student or group that scored at the 76th percentile in Reading indicates that this student or group scored at or above the score of 76% of students or groups nationwide.

The percentile ranks for our students in Reading in 2002 are as follows: Grade 4 - 82.0, Grade 6 - 94.0 and Grade 8 - 84.0. This means that our groups scored higher than 82%, 94% and 84%, respectively of the groups that were tested nationally in these grades in Reading. Some additional assessment information reveals that a significant number of our students possess a high degree of mastery of knowledge, skills and abilities, which would be expected of proficient students. The percentage of students with high proficiency scores in Reading were 56.75% in grade four, 94% in grade six and 83% in grade eight. As a group, grade four showed strong performance in basic reading skills, such as identifying reading strategies and evaluating meaning. More in-depth reading skills, such as drawing conclusions, recognizing cause and effect and identifying themes are less well-developed with this group. These skills are addressed prominently in instruction at fourth through sixth grade. As a group, both grade six and grade eight showed strong performance in all reading skill areas tested.

The percentile ranks for our students in Mathematics in 2002 are as follows: Grade 4 - 63.0, Grade 6 - 82.8 and Grade 8 - 85.0. This means that our groups scored higher than 63%, 82.8% and 85%, respectively of the groups that were tested nationally in these grades in Mathematics. Though not as strong as Reading, a significant number of our students also possess a high degree of mastery of knowledge, skills and abilities, which would be expected of students proficient in Math. The percentage of students with high proficiency scores in Mathematics were 22.11% in grade four, 73.62% in grade six and 64.62% in grade eight. As a group, grade four showed strong performance in data analysis, statistics and geometry. Though still in the range of moderate mastery, these students were not as strong in areas such as problem solving and reasoning and algebra. Many of these students are still working at a concrete level with the manipulative math materials. Moving to the abstract level of math understanding is viewed as an anticipated and expected progression in the fourth through sixth grades. As a group, both grade six and grade eight again showed strong performance in all mathematical skill areas tested.

Our student body is quite diverse. The test of cognitive skills indicated students with a wide array of scores. Though the average was 116, the scores ranged from a low of 80 to a high of 141. This diversity is reflected in the student test scores on the achievement tests. However, it is historically notable that if the group remains static, with each successive test, the students, both individually and as a group, show continued growth in acquisition of knowledge and skills. Ultimately, this is our primary goal.

## **2. Using Our Assessment Data to Improve Student Learning**

We use many different assessment tools to determine strengths and areas for improvement, both on an individual basis and as a school. With a minimum of two teachers in each classroom, it is feasible for our teachers to spend time observing a student working independently or interacting socially with peers. Teachers keep anecdotal records and document behaviors that they observe. Teacher journals and record books are also used to track the work choices, level of understanding, progress and development of each student. These tools are used on a daily basis and give our teachers an ongoing picture of the whole child and his or her individual needs. These needs often determine many of the small group lessons that teachers will present to the students. Every student in our school has a portfolio in which examples of quality work are kept. One of our continuous improvement plan goals is to assess and constantly improve the quality of work that our students produce. Along with each piece of work in a portfolio is an evaluation form. Both the student and the teacher evaluate the work and then conference about it. Strengths are noted and goals are set for future work. At least four examples of work are reviewed each year for each child in our school. Portfolios are also used at conferences to share evaluations and quality of work with students' parents. More formal assessment tools used at St. Joseph Montessori School include standardized testing, paper and pencil tests, rubrics and timed tests. Though much of the learning done by our younger students is with manipulative materials, we also guide them toward abstract understanding of concepts and use assessment techniques that test that level of understanding. We are dedicated to collecting assessment data in order to assess learner objectives, assure a comprehensive sequence of concepts from level to level and overall, to improve upon the educational program that we offer to our students and families.

## **3. Communicating Student Performance**

Our school uses many methods to communicate with our parents, students and the community. Formally, written reports are prepared six times each year, with three of those reports coinciding with parent-teacher conferences. Each year, our Terra Nova test results are analyzed individually, by classes and as a school. Detailed scoring reports are sent home with every child who has taken the test and group scoring results are distributed to our Board of Trustees, SJMS families and interested community members. All parents are invited to as many as six parent education evenings throughout the year. These are used to introduce our families to their children's classrooms, to educate them on the Montessori philosophy and curriculum, to prepare them for their children's transitions to new levels and to make presentations that align with our school continuous improvement plan. Our web page is regularly updated and can be used to access homework, information about classroom events, examples of student work and class newsletters, which are sent home monthly. The Montessorian is a bi-monthly publication written by our staff and seventh and eighth grade students. It highlights school events and news from our classrooms, principal and Family Association. Informally, teachers use notes for positive recognition as well as daily behavior modification plans, which are discussed with students and sent home to parents. All teachers have e-mail addresses, which are used frequently by parents. Teachers and students communicate daily about appropriate work choices and quality of work. All students have a portfolio that is used to collect and evaluate work samples. Teachers and students discuss the students' work and look for areas of improvement. One of the key ways that we communicate with the community is through our Development Director. He prepares news releases, maintains contact with alumni and is involved with local community organizations. In addition, our Board of Trustees publishes Directions, a report on our school that is sent to current and former families, alumni, area businesses, donors and other interested community members. Finally, probably the best way that we share the accomplishments of our students is through our Interest Fair. Over 100 of our students research a topic of their choice and prepare a display board, a three dimensional model, a written report and a presentation. We invite community members representing a variety of careers and disciplines to judge our students' projects. Year after year, this event continues to impress our judges. It is our best opportunity to showcase the talents of our students and to communicate to others the successes of our school.



#### **4. Sharing Our Success with Other Schools**

St. Joseph Montessori School shares its successes, resources and expertise with other schools in the Central Ohio area and beyond. We have pioneered a unique partnership with our neighboring public school to co-sponsor a conference on writing for children. The annual conference attracts teachers, parents and aspiring children's authors and illustrators. Each year, the featured authors and illustrators spend several days prior to the conference visiting both schools, interacting with the children, leading writers' workshops and making presentations on their work. In addition, the conference sponsors a family storytelling evening, open to all school children in the immediate neighborhood, and has opened a free writing resource center, *the write place*, featuring expertise from local writers and authors. SJMS faculty and parents volunteer their time each year on planning committees and during the week of the conference to make it a great success! Our school also hosts a yearly teacher-training center for Montessori teachers. Teachers from around the country travel to SJMS each summer to attain their Montessori teaching credentials. Several teachers from our school are on the faculty of the teacher-training program and some serve as teacher consultants, mentoring the adult students throughout the school year. Teachers from St. Joseph Montessori School have been invited to make presentations to professional educational groups on a variety of subjects, such as mathematics and the Montessori philosophy. Our principal attends frequent diocesan principals' meetings, which provide opportunities to interact and collaborate with other schools. In addition, she works on accreditation teams, visiting and providing external guidance to schools in Ohio seeking accreditation. Another way that SJMS supports and encourages fellow institutions is through a service effort called Project Care. School-wide, we have several collections each year of school supplies, food, clothing and winter accessories, to name a few. These items are usually donated to our "adopted school," a fellow diocesan school with many families and children in need. For the past three years, individual classrooms have also adopted families from our neighboring public school community at either Thanksgiving or Christmas. Finally, we offer service opportunities for our students including a student service organization that meets regularly for hands-on service projects and monthly classroom trips to both a local soup kitchen and a nursing home. St. Joseph Montessori School feels fortunate to have the talents and resources to be able to share our successes with other schools and members of our community.

## **PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Our School Curriculum**

The curriculum at SJMS is based on the Montessori philosophy of education. Dr. Maria Montessori believed that each child learns differently and at his or her own pace. She developed a system of education based on the ideas of individualized instruction, multi-age classrooms, use of scientifically developed manipulative materials and a prepared classroom environment that supports and nurtures learning. In our Children's House and Primary classrooms, the teachers act as guides while the children work to develop concentration, coordination, order and independence. Many of the materials are self-correcting and the children learn through exploration and experimentation. At the upper levels, the work becomes more abstract, but is built upon prior knowledge and experience. Students master the skills of independence and responsibility, as the teachers guide them in planning their study time and in making choices about their work. The curriculum is comprehensive, integrated and designed so that each child will be appropriately challenged or supported, depending on ability and need.

Our language arts curriculum takes a phonetic and literature-based approach. In Children's House, materials such as sandpaper letters and the moveable alphabet are used to help students develop early reading skills. In the Primary classes, reading skills are fully developed with exposure to an environment rich in language opportunities and literature. Grammar studies are begun at this level, with all parts of speech being introduced by the end of third grade. Our students study the structure of sentences and use their knowledge of grammar to enhance their writing. We teach the process of writing and offer a publishing center where our students can bind their creative ideas into books. Fourth through eighth grade students focus on developing their writing skills and can participate in Power of the Pen in seventh and eighth grade. Their reading work is literature-based and includes a wide variety of non-fiction books and novels that are closely connected to their studies in other areas.

One of the strengths of the Montessori program is the sequential math curriculum, which uses manipulative materials to build a strong foundation in mathematical operations. From the Golden Bead Material which is used to count units, tens, hundreds and thousands to the Checkerboard which guides students in solving multi-digit multiplication problems, the Montessori math materials provide a solid understanding of the how and why behind each operation and equation. In Middle School, our students move onto more abstract math concepts and the memorization of facts and formulas. Seventh and eighth grade students continue their mathematical studies with pre-algebra and can take a qualifying test for high school algebra, to be taken in their eighth grade year.

Cultural subjects include life and physical sciences, biology, history and geography. These subjects are a part of the curriculum at every level. Students explore the habitats and body systems of animals in zoology, learn about plant life in botany and study the states of matter, volcanoes, the development of the Earth, the water cycle and weather changes, among other topics in physical science. Human, animal, plant and cell biology is examined in the upper grades. History is closely connected to life sciences, as our students use the Timeline of Life to learn about the universe and the development of life on Earth, up to the appearance of humans. This leads to studies of many different cultures that have inhabited our Earth over time. The older children thoroughly study World and American History and link this to their studies of geography.

In addition to the core curriculum areas are classes in Spanish, art, music, religion, library and physical education which meet from one to three times every week. Spanish lessons begin in Children's House, expand to include greater vocabulary studies and celebrations of Hispanic traditions in Primary and Middle School and begin formalized lessons with textbooks and evaluations in sixth grade. Each child at SJMS creates an art portfolio, in which they keep work reflecting various techniques, media and artistic styles of artists. Music studies begin in pre-kindergarten and build cumulatively each year. Piano and instrumental lessons are offered, along with Beginning Band, Advanced Band, Honors Ensemble and Bell Choir. Finally, each year, at least one of our levels presents a culminating musical drama.

## **2. Our Reading Curriculum**

St. Joseph Montessori School follows a comprehensive reading curriculum that provides a foundation for life-long learning. Our pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students begin with early skill development through a series of self-directed activities. They use manipulative materials to practice and master all of the key components of reading. Most children begin reading phonetic words and early readers prior to first grade. Through the use of a multi-sensory approach, all learning styles are nurtured. Literature is read aloud in order to build reading comprehension skills. In our Primary classrooms, children continue to develop and refine their reading skills. The curriculum is phonics-based and supplemented by a whole language approach. Reading is integrated into every subject area. Children learn decoding skills, phonograms and sight word vocabulary. Leveled books are used to best match the skills of the emergent reader. Students also listen to and read a wide variety of quality fiction and non-fiction literature. Their progress is constantly monitored using observation and assessments of skill development. A Reading Recovery-trained tutor is available for students identified with specific needs in reading. Our Middle School curriculum is literature-based. Students are exposed to textbooks, newspapers, fiction and non-fiction books, as well as book collections of several authors. They develop critical thinking skills as they explore the components of good writing and the elements of a good story. They also learn to look for and understand figures of speech. Grades seven and eight read novels and participate in literature circles, evaluating the books that they have read. They put to use their prior knowledge of the components of good writing as they write five-paragraph essays, creative short stories, journals, fairy tales and fables. St. Joseph Montessori School uses a wide variety of strategies to help our youngest children learn to read and to fully develop the skills of our proficient readers. We believe that our students are diverse individuals who will learn at different paces and in slightly different ways. Therefore, our teachers work together to continually revise our reading curriculum and to ensure that it is comprehensive, using each year as a building block for the next. We identify the skill level of each child and then use the combination of strategies that work best. Our teachers attend seminars and keep abreast of new methods and best practices, so that we can strive to meet the reading needs of each child in our school.

## **3. Our Cultural Subjects Curriculum**

Part of the Montessori philosophy of education is the belief that the cultural subjects, including history, geography, biological and physical sciences, are vital to the development of the child. The classroom environment features materials for these subjects and integrates the cultural subjects, language arts and mathematics curricula to meet the needs of the whole child. Children's House activities are sensorial in approach. Puzzle maps of continents, globes with tactile land surfaces and work with types of animals and plants are explored. These activities enhance knowledge of the world, spark imagination and foster the acquisition of language. History studies center on the diversity of people and cultures, emphasizing respect for one another and the environment. Students in the Primary classrooms continue to examine the physical aspects of the Earth, learning names for physical features and scientific vocabulary for plants and animals. Historical time is viewed in sequential development through the Clock of Eras and the Timeline of Life, two Montessori materials that encourage discussion and writing, as well as the timely ordering of events and complex information. As students enter Middle School, the need for intellectual organization is even greater. History work starts with the beginnings of the earliest civilizations and is integrated with geography studies. Biology lessons use nomenclature materials and charts to expand students' skills in scientific classification and anatomy. Our seventh and eighth grade classes benefit from their prior use of Montessori materials and the integration of the cultural subjects as they strive to create intellectual connections in their advanced studies. Throughout all levels, verbal and written language exercises use the cultural subjects as inspiration for creative and informational writing. Literature is integrated with these studies and collaboration between classroom teachers and specialists link many other activities as well. We believe that it is important to include the cultural subjects in our classroom curricula if we are to offer the keys to all areas of exploration and understanding. This kind of curriculum assists our students in adapting to their world and creates the spark of curiosity that develops lifelong learners.

#### **4. Our Instructional Methods**

Teachers at SJMS use a wide variety of instructional methods in order to best respond to the learning styles and needs of our diverse learners. Whole group, small group and individualized instruction is utilized. Especially in the Children's House and Primary classrooms, scientifically designed manipulative materials are used so that the children can learn, self-correct and further their knowledge and skills. The materials gradually progress the students' knowledge from concrete learning to abstract thinking. Many opportunities are presented for hands-on learning, including science experimentation. In our multi-age classrooms, cooperative learning and peer tutoring occur frequently. Technology-based learning and daily review activities in the areas of language mechanics, sight word recognition, math fact proficiency and problem solving are used at every level. Teachers integrate the curriculum areas, including art, music, Spanish and library skills, in order to present our students with a well-rounded picture of a unit being studied. Recently, our Primary classrooms studied the continent of Asia. All 90 students were involved in an active study of the languages, cultures, music, art, geography, history and literature of several different regions of the continent. Their study of Asia was integrated into their reading, writing and social studies work. As a culmination, each small group prepared a presentation for the rest of the students. At the upper grades, teachers involve students in discussions, including thought-provoking questions and higher-level thinking. They utilize peer and teacher conferencing to help the students further develop and refine the quality of their work. Technology is integrated into the curriculum and students use carefully monitored web-based research to explore topics of study beyond their textbooks. Students are involved in both group and independent study projects, the most notable being their Interest Fair project. Our goal is to guide every child in his or her learning, developing strengths and supporting weaknesses as they arise. We feel that by putting into practice many different instructional strategies and methods, we are best able to extend our students' thinking and advance them in their education.

#### **6. Our Professional Development Program**

Professional development is an important focus at St. Joseph Montessori School. Our annual budget affords financial support to staff members who wish to take classes or attend conferences. Each staff member is also allocated two school days every year for professional development endeavors. The professional development program of our school is intimately connected to our school's continuous improvement plan, which focuses on student-centered learning goals. These goals become our guide for staff professional development. One of our current goals is related to improving communication skills among our staff, students and parents. During the past two years, our entire teaching staff has participated in two seminars, one of which focused on oral communication and the other on problem solving. The classroom teachers then used the information gained from these seminars to develop lessons and activities for use in the classroom setting. We also invited one of the presenters to attend a parent education meeting so that she could share her methods with our families. As a staff, we attend the Writing for Children, American Montessori Society and Ohio Catholic Education Association conferences. At these conferences, our teachers are asked to select at least one workshop that is related to a goal from our current continuous improvement plan. Their other choices are determined based on personal and classroom needs. Due to the wide age range of our students (ages 3 to 14), our teachers often pursue professional development on an individual or small group basis. Teachers have attended conferences on literacy centers, technology and positive discipline, among other topics. Following any professional development experience, teachers are asked to share information, newly-acquired skills and practical applications for the classroom with others at one of our bi-monthly staff or level meetings. We also maintain a folder of local professional development opportunities. Teachers are encouraged to register for appropriate selections that meet their current needs. Several teachers also take college courses or are working on advanced degrees. We feel that professional growth on the part of our staff is key to enhancing the educational environment that we are able to offer our students. Through professional development, our teachers have been able to work collaboratively toward our continuous improvement goals. This has resulted in continued growth and achievement for our students.

## **PART VI – PRIVATE SCHOOL ADDENDUM**

*The purpose of this addendum is to obtain additional information from private schools as noted below. Attach the completed addendum to the end of the application, before the assessment data tables.*

Private school association(s): National Catholic Education Association, American Montessori Society,  
Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Columbus  
(Give primary religious or independent association only)

Does the school have nonprofit, tax exempt (501(c)(3)) status?      Yes   X      No       

### **Part II – Demographics**

1. What are the 2001-2002 tuition rates, by grade? (Do not include room, board, or fees.)

\$ <u>5300</u>	\$ <u>5300</u>	\$ <u>5300</u>	\$ <u>5300</u>	\$ <u>5400</u>	\$ <u>5400</u>
K	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
\$ <u>5400</u>	\$ <u>5700</u>	\$ <u>5700</u>	\$ <u>      </u>	\$ <u>      </u>	\$ <u>      </u>
6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>
\$ <u>      </u>	\$ <u>4250</u>				
12 <sup>th</sup>	Pre-K				

2. What is the educational cost per student?      \$ 6827  
(School budget divided by enrollment)
3. What is the average financial aid per student?      \$ 2078
4. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?        4.5   %
5. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction?        15   %

**REPORTED ASSESSMENT DATA**  
**REFERENCED AGAINST NATIONAL NORMS**  
**With Subgroups**

**ST. JOSEPH MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

California Achievement Tests  
 Fifth Edition, 1992

CTB MacMillan/McGraw Hill Publishing Company  
 Years used: 1998, 1999, 2000

Terra Nova Achievement Tests  
 The Second Edition, 2001

CTB MacMillan/McGraw Hill Publishing Company  
 Years used: 2001, 2002

	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Testing Month	October	October	October	October	October
<b>Grade 4</b>					
Reading	88.5	80.0	90.0	78.0	82.0
Mathematics	82.3	76.0	80.8	73.0	63.0
Number of students tested	26	21	27	21	23
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of students excluded	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students excluded	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
African-American students					
Reading	59.5	55.5	75.3	75.7	80.3
Mathematics	41.0	40.8	76	57.3	49.3
Number of students tested	2	4	3	3	6
<b>Grade 6</b>					
Reading	85.5	79.3	89.7	87.0	94.0
Mathematics	80.5	73.3	90.0	80.0	90.3
Number of students tested	22	16	23	19	16
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of students excluded	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students excluded	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
African-American students					
Reading	81.0	61.0	n/a	61.3	97.0
Mathematics	88.0	50.8	n/a	43.0	82.0
Number of students tested	2	4	0	3	1
<b>Grade 8</b>					
Reading	90.5	75.0	87.0	83.0	84.0
Mathematics	89.0	87.3	88.0	83.7	85.0
Number of students tested	18	13	22	15	12
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of students excluded	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students excluded	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
African-American students					
Reading	70.7	60.7	73.0	70.0	n/a
Mathematics	71.0	72.7	90.0	57.7	n/a
Number of students tested	3	3	2	3	0

## **EXPLANATION OF SUBGROUP ASSESSMENT DATA**

Overall, our assessment data reflects the success of our program and our high level of achievement, with our average reading score being in the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile and our average math score being in the 82<sup>nd</sup> percentile. The increasing national percentiles of each group as they are tested every two years is evidence of the academic growth of our students and the ability of our educational program to meet their changing needs. Our students' scores increased an average of nearly four percentage points as they moved from fourth, to sixth and finally to eighth grade.

We have disaggregated the scores for our African-American students, who comprise 15.4% of our school population and, in most cases, at least 10% of our tested students. When averaged, their scores appear to be somewhat lower than our school averages. However, we have looked at those scores individually, on a student-by-student basis and have identified some interesting data that we feel is pertinent to fully understanding our subgroup scores.

First, over a five year period, our disaggregated data represents a total of only thirty African-American students. Of these thirty students, only nine were tested a second time within the five years of data that we are reporting. We are able to track the progress of these nine students from one test to the next. This tracking shows an average reading score improvement of 6.8 percentage points and an average math score improvement of 5.3 percentage points, with four students improving seventeen percentage points or more in reading or math. Students who have moved away, those who have been referred to more specialized programs or students who have graduated from our school within the five year time span account for the remaining twenty-one students.

Additionally, of the thirty students represented in the African-American subgroups, it is important to note that eleven are students diagnosed with specific learning disabilities, ADD/ADHD, serious emotional or adoption-related issues or other types of special needs. Adaptations were not made for these students when tested, but 50% of the thirty students have previously received or currently receive some form of academic or psychological intervention.

While many of these African-American students come from stable, middle-income families, there is, coincidentally, a high percentage of students with learning difficulties or personal issues, which likely affect their academic growth and development. St. Joseph Montessori School uses the data from these assessments, along with professional evaluations by our school psychologist to appropriately adapt lessons and facilitate continued acquisition of knowledge for all of our students.